

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-01 ICA-11 SP-02 SCS-06 AID-05 PC-01 EUR-12

/059 W

-----056872 090004Z /21

R 071220Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4410

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL DURBAN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MBABANE 1179

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, WZ

SUBJECT: HARASSMENT OF TRAVELERS IN EASTERN SWAZILAND

REF: A) MBABANE 1098 B) MBABANE A-4, 77 MBABANE A-29 & 19

SUMMARY: ON APRIL 3 EMBOFF TRAVELLED THROUGH EASTERN SECTION OF SWAZILAND THAT HAD REPRTEDELY BEEN LOCATION OF HARASSMENT OF BOTH BLACK AND WHITE TRAVELERS BY SWAZI SOLDIERS. EMBOFF CONFIRMED THAT INCIDENTS HAD BEEN NUMEROUS IN SOUTHEASTERN SWAZILAND AND OFTEN DANGEROUS AS SOLDIERS CARELESSLY HANDLED THEIR FIREARMS. THE SOLDIERS APPARENTLY WERE OVER-REACTING TO ORDERS TO TRY TO REDUCE ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN THE AREA THAT HAS RESULTED FROM A TRIBAL CLASH. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF TRAVELLED THROUGH SOUTHEASTERN SWAZILAND TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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VERIFY REPORTS OF HARASSMENT OF BOTH BLACK AND WHITE TRAVELLERS BY SWAZI SOLDIERS. SEVERAL PEOPLE CONTACTED, INCLUDING AMERICAN MISSIONARIES RESIDENT IN THE AREA, HAD BEEN STOPPED, OR HAD FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WHO HAD BOTH THEIR PERSONS AND VEHICLES SEARCHED. ALL DESCRIPTIONS WERE UNANIMOUS IN THE BRUSQUE, THREATENING MANNER AND THE CARELESS HANDLING OF FIREARMS DISPLAYED BY THE SOLDIERS.

MOST PEOPLE CLAIMED THAT THE SOLDIERS HAD BEEN OR WERE DRINKING.

2. THE FULLEST EXPLANATION CAME FROM M.C. CHRISTIE, HEAD OF MINE RECRUITING ORGANIZATION IN SITEKI. CHRISTIE HAD TO GET TWO SOUTH AFRICAN COLLEAGUES OUT OF LOCAL POLICE STATION AFTER SOLDIERS HAD FORCED THE MEN OUT OF THEIR CAR AT GUNPOINT AND TURNED THEM OVER TO LOCAL POLICE ON ILLEGAL ENTRY CHARGES. CHRISTIE DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH POLICE WHO WERE ONLY TOO GLAD TO RELEASE THE TWO MEN AS THE CHARGES AGAINST THE MEN WERE QUITE INACCURATE AND SOLDIERS HAVE NO LEGAL BASIS TO ARREST ANYONE. CHRISTIE ALSO TALKED TO THE LIEUTENANT WHO WAS COMMANDING THE SQUAD THAT WAS HARASSING THE TRAVELLERS.

3. THE LIEUTENANT STATED THAT THEY HAD BEEN ORDERED TO SEARCH FOR BOMBS AND WEAPONS THAT MIGHT BE USED IN THE ONGOING MNGOMEZULU TRIBAL FEUD. FYI. AS NOTED IN REFS B, THAT AREA OF SWAZILAND HAS BEEN THE SCENE OF REPEATED TRIBAL CLASHES AMONG THE MNGOMEZULU CLAN WHICH IS SPLIT INTO TWO FACTIONS FOLLOWING THE CHIEF'S BEING DEPOSED BY SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES. THE DEPOSED CHIEF AND AN ESTIMATED 5,000 OF HIS FOLLOWERS FLED TO SWAZILAND AND MADE RAIDS ACROSS THE BORDER INTO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SOUTH AFRICA. THE LEVEL OF VIOLENCE HAS ESCALATED AND NUMEROUS DEATHS HAVE BEEN REPORTED ON BOTH SIDES. END FYI.

4. COMMENT: THE SOLDIERS WERE OBVIOUSLY OVER-REACTING AND THROWING THEIR WEIGHT AROUND. THERE WAS NO CLEAR EVIDENCE OF AN ANTI-WHITE BIAS IN THE SOLDIERS ACTIONS; SWAZIS WERE ALSO FORCED OUT OF THEIR CAR AT GUNPOINT AND THERE WERE UNCONFIRMED STORIES OF SWAZI WOMEN WHO WERE TRAVELING ALONG BEING DETAINED. SUPPOSEDLY THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ARMY COMMANDER, WENT TO THE AREA AND PUT A STOP TO ALL SUCH INCIDENTS. PERLOW

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HARASSMENT, POLICE FORCES, SECURITY CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 07 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MBABAN01179
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780153-0299
Format: TEL
From: MBABANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780481/aaaacqxw.tel
Line Count: 107
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 3c9cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MBABANE 1098, 78 MBABANE A-4, 77 MBABANE A-29
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3042716
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HARASSMENT OF TRAVELERS IN EASTERN SWAZILAND
TAGS: PINS, WZ
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/3c9cd4b4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014